

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7635

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2140

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT MOPS LE

SUBJ: BACHIR GEMAYEL ON BEIRUT INCIDENTS? SOUTH LEBANON

1. EMBOFF MET WITH BACHIR GEMAYEL ON APRIL 14, ON PREVIOUSLY
ARRANGED APPOINTMENT. ON PROSPECTS OF CEASE-FIRE ARRANGEMENTS
HOLDING IN AYN AR-RUMMANEH-SHIAH, BACHIR SAID HE HOPED SO.
EMBOFF STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING MILITIA FOR SAKE OF
POPULATION OF AYN AR-RUMMANEH, AND POINTED OUT THAT REPUTATION OF
MILITIA ORGANIZATIONS DEPENDED TO LARGE PART ON ABILITY OF THE
ORGANIZATIONS TO CONTROL THEIR OWN MEMBERS.

2. BACHIR SAID HE BLAMES THE PALESTINIANS FOR HAVING INSTIGATED
ORIGINAL AYN AR-RUMMANEH-SHIAH INCIDENTS ON APRIL 9. WHEN
EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT
VIEW THAT PALESTINIAN ORGANIZATIONS WERE INVOLVED, BACHIR
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ARGUED THAT LEBANESE LEFTISTS WERE OPERATING AS PUPPETS
OR MERCENARIES FOR THE PALESTINIANS.

3. HE SAID HE WAS ALSO CONVINCED THAT SYRIANS WERE WORKING
TOGETHER WITH THE LEFTISTS AGAINST THE CHRISTIANS; HE CLAIMED
HE HAD FIRM EVIDENCE THAT PPS AND OTHER LEFTISTS ACTUALLY
ACCOMPANIED SYRIAN TROOPS DURING THEIR ENTRY-IN-FORCE INTO

THE AREA ON APRIL 11 TO POINT OUT PHALANGE STRONGPOINTS.

4. BACHIR SAID UNDERLYING PROBLEM WAS QUESTION OF "OUR DIGNITY". HE CLAIMED HE WAS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPAL TO SYRIANS MAINTAINING PEACE IN STREETS OF BEIRUT, BUT THAT THEY WENT ABOUT IT IN WAY WHICH WAS DEGRADING AND INSULTING TO THE CHRISTIANS. EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT EFFORT ON HIS PART AND OTHER PHALANGE LEADERS TO DEVELOP BETTER RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SYRIAN COMMANDERS AND ADF "COMMANDER" KHATIB MIGHT HELP. BACHIR PUT DOWN KHATIB AS PART OF OLD CHEHABIST ESTABLISHMENT IN LEBANON WHICH HAD BROUGHT THE COUNTRY TO RUIN IN FIRST PLACE. (COMMENT: EVEN BEFORE THE FEBRUARY FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS, BACHIR HAD TAKEN POSITION THAT SYRIANS HAD NO BUSINESS PATROLLING STREETS OF EAST BEIRUT, AND ONLY A WEEK EARLIER HE HAD TOLD EMBOFF HE APPROVED OF SYRIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM EXPOSED POSITIONS AFTER FAYYADIYAH INCIDENTS. IT IS CLEAR THAT HIS CONCEPT OF LEBANESE DIGNITY CAN ONLY BE SATISFIED BY COMPLETE ABSENCE OF SYRIANS.)

5. ON POSSIBLE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF LEBANESE SITUATION, EMBOFF POINTED OUT THAT EVEN GETTING UN TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY ACCORDING TO UN RESOLUTIONS IN SOUTH LEBANON WAS PROVING TO BE VERY DIFFICULT, EVEN BEFORE POLITICAL COMMITMENT OF CONTRIBUTORY STATES TO UNIFIL HAD BEEN TESTED IN THE FIELD. EMBOFF MADE POINT THAT "INTERNATIONALIZATION" OF LEBANESE SITUATION GENERALLY WAS COMPLETELY OUT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL

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QUESTION.

6. ON SOUTH LEBANON, WITH A STRAIGHT FACE BACHIR ASKED EMBOFF IF IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR U.S. TO LEND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO DEVELOP NAKOURA AS A "MILITARY PORT". HE SAID THAT LIAISON BY SHIP HAD NOW BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN JOUNIEH AND NAKOURA, AND INDICATED THAT HE HAD GREAT HOPES THAT THIS DIRECT LINK BETWEEN THE MARONITE HEARTLAND AND THE LEBANESE CHRISTIAN FORCES ALONG THE ISRAELI BORDER COULD BE DEVELOPED. (COMMENT: THIS IS AN OLD DREAM OF BACHIR'S; IT IS SURPRISING HE STILL CLINGS TO IT DESPITE HIS PROFESSED COMPLETE DISILLUSION WITH THE WAY THE ISRAELIS CONDUCTED THEIR OPERATION IN SOUTH LEBANON.

7. COMMENT: WHILE BASHIR IS MAINTAINING POSE OF MAN TRYING TO RESTRAIN HIS FOLLOWERS, FONMIN BOUTROS TOLD AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 14 THAT KATAEB HAD GONE TO LEBANESE ARMY OFFICERS TWO DAYS EARLIER AND TRIED TO GET THEM TO BRING THEIR UNITS INTO ACTION AGAINST SYRIANS, ARGUING THAT THEIR WEAPONS WERE TO NO PURPOSE IF THEY WERE NOT PREPARED DEFEND AIN AR-RUMMANEH. MORNING OF APRIL 15 PRESS REPORTS CHAMOUN HAS RAISED QUESTION OF ROLE OF GOL IN ORDERING SYRIANS TO INTERVENE AND

FIRE AT CIVILIANS IN MANNER NO OTHER CIVILIZED GOVERNMENT
HAS EVER PERMITTED. CHRISTIAN LINE AGAINST SYRIANS IS
BEING DRAWN CLEARER AND CLEARER, AND PRESSURES ON SARKIS
TO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THEM WILL MOUNT.
PARKER

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